

Construction Site Management Strategy Staying Safe While Building in Bear Country

Over the years, bears have increasingly become a concern at worksites. Workers at construction sites in Whistler have been injured by bears attempting to gain access to food and garbage.

Bears are attracted to worksites by food, drinks, garbage, food wrappers, empty drink containers as well as petroleum products. A bear that is rewarded by food/garbage will return again and again for more, creating a potential safety hazard for workers. Bear-proof storage and disposal containers must be available for use on the site. Workers must be advised that lunch boxes, coolers and cars are not bear-proof.

Clean sites do not experience human-bear conflicts.

Keep your worksite safe

It's very important to educate every crew member working in bear country, but particularly transient, city and seasonal workers as they often don't realize the implication of their actions and the reality of working in bear habitat. By ensuring all workers are properly trained in bear safety and they follow these simple guidelines, your work site will be safer for you, your employees, and bears.

- Store all food (lunches, snacks, drinks, etc) inside a secure building, bear-resistant food container, bear-proof locker or a locking, closed metal container (c-cans work well).
- As a last resort, store food in a locked car with the windows rolled up. Be aware, however, that damage to your vehicle may result as bears have been known to rip off the doors and windows to access even a candy wrapper, used coffee cup or banana peel.
- All food waste, food packaging and empty drink containers (including coffee cups, pop cans, etc) must be immediately disposed of in bear-proof garbage or recycling receptacles, NOT in open topped construction bins (they are NOT bear-proof). This is the law: RMOW Solid Waste Bylaw
 - o  [Solid Waste Bylaw No. 2139, 2017](#)
 - o  [Solid Waste Amendment Bylaw No. 2175, 2018](#)
- If waste can not be disposed of immediately in a bear-proof garbage bin, store it in the c-cans or bear-resistant food containers temporarily. You could also temporarily store it inside a secure, lockable building, keeping in mind that bears may enter trailers and other temporary structures if lured inside by the smell of food or garbage. If doing so, keep all windows and doors shut at all times, and lock the building at night (bears have been known to open doors, especially doors with lever style handles).
- Petroleum products are also attractive to bears and may lure them on site. Keep all oil, gas and other petroleum products in a fire-proof metal storage locker when not in immediate use. Use a lime/spill kit to clean up any oil spills.
- Make sure the site is free of garbage/recycling and other attractants on a regular basis – at a minimum, each evening once work has ceased for the day.

What to do when you see a bear

If a bear is on or approaching your site, report the incident to your job supervisor immediately. Never approach the bear. While some Whistler bears will flee, others may stand their ground and even defend food or garbage. Injuries to people rarely result, but it's critical not to corner or provoke the bear. Always provide the bear with an escape route that is clear of obstacles and people/vehicles. Once the bear has left the area, remove the food source that attracted them.

Training

Work Bear Safe Training is strongly recommended at all work sites. Contact the Get Bear Smart Society for more information at info@bearsmart.com.

When/how to report a problem

Report human-bear conflict if a bear is causing property damage or posing a threat to human safety to 604-905-BEAR (2327).

How does the law affect me?

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in immediate daily fines issued by the RMOW Bylaw Services (Bylaw 2139/2175 as noted above) of up to \$500 per day; and/or a \$575 fine issued by the Conservation Officer Service (COS) under the BC Wildlife Act (Section 33.1) for failure to remove attractants. The COS may also order you to remedy the underlying issues within a set timeframe. Failure to comply will result in fines or prosecution (resulting in up to six months in jail and/or a \$25,000 fine on the first offence; and up to a year in jail and/or a \$50,000 fine on the second offence).

The safety of your staff (as well as the bears) depends on you! Be the leader you know you can be by making a difference today.

Resources:

For further information and to find out more about bears, please visit our website at <http://www.bearsmart.com/work/overview/>. You will find information on helpful videos, brochures.

For information on bear-resistant food storage containers and bear-proof storage lockers and where to buy them, see: www.bearsmart.com/becoming-bear-smart/play/securing-food-garbage.

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